

## **NORFOLK, VIRGINIA**

### **REGULAR SESSION OF COUNCIL**

**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2013**

City Council met on this date in joint session with members of the City Planning Commission.

President Fraim called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. with the following members present: Mr. Protogyrou, Mr. Riddick, Mr. Smigiel, Dr. Whibley, Ms. Williams and Mr. Winn. Mr. Burfoot was absent.

Planning Commissioners present were: Earl Fraley, chair, Martin Thomas, Jr., vice-chair, Lisa Chandler, Lorraine Flood, Matthew Hales, Bradley Law, and Daniel Neumann, MD.

He thereupon welcomed members of the Planning Commission to the meeting.

He next called for the first discussion item with the Planning Commission.

#### **A. CITY PLANNING COMMISSION**

Mr. Duke explained the five-year development trend in applications. He added that a two-year comparison was done with regard to various types of applications that included special exceptions, re-zonings, text and plan amendments, and street closures. The applications were scattered throughout the city with clusters in Ghent and downtown. Special exceptions continue to be the most common applications and the types of applications include: ABC, auto, after midnight, commercial drive-through, off-lot parking, mixed use, used merchandise and resume nonconforming use.

Mr. Duke reviewed the following:

- Significant increase in text amendments to the Zoning Ordinance. A majority of those were initiated by the city and were associated with the Smart Processing initiative. He noted that the flood protection revisions are the most significant Ordinance change in 2013 and they met with the Hampton Roads Realtors, Tidewater Builders Association and the Willoughby Civic League concerning issues. The Ordinance will come before City Council for a public hearing in November.
- Updating the Zoning Ordinance. The Zoning Ordinance is very old and they keep finding internal contradictions. He added that there are some places where the Ordinance no longer meets current legal requirements; therefore, the Planning Commission is urging a complete overhaul of the Zoning Ordinance. They are releasing an RFP to do this and funding is available as a Smart Processing initiative.
- Auto-related special exceptions. There has been an increase in the number of applications in areas like Little Creek Road where there is significant neighborhood opposition. Presently, there is nothing in the Neighborhood Plan for East Little Creek Road dealing specifically with that use.
- Televising Planning Commission meetings.

City Council directed that a more definitive policy be incorporated into the neighborhood plan prohibiting auto-related establishments in the Little Creek Road corridor. They asked that language be inserted to include the Military Highway corridor. They also asked the City Manager to analyze costs associated with televising the Planning Commission meetings.

In addition Council asked:

- With regards to the Master Plan and growing open space for parks and recreation, to look at long-term initiatives for maintaining green spaces to reduce our risk for flooding.

- That revisions to the Open Space/Landscaping Ordinance include language reflecting that property owners maintain their properties to the appropriate standards and suggested that appropriate staff check every year to see that they are complying.
- Provide to City Council the Planning Commission's Notice of Advertisement as well as results the day after applications have been voted on. In addition, in an effort to move applications more quickly through the process, to eliminate the setting of the public hearing from City Council's docket.
- Look at revisions to the Sign Ordinance that would protect the architectural integrity of our older buildings. Councilman Riddick referenced the Dominion Enterprises building that is obstructed by a sign. He asked if there might be a way to relocate the sign. Councilman Smigiel referenced recent requests by Adams Billboards and stated that there might be an opportunity to partner with them to promote advertising for city events, missing children, teacher of the year, et cetera.

In closing, Mr. Duke noted that the American Planning Association has recognized City Council, Planning Commission, staff and our neighborhoods for a number of issues; winning the Outstanding Comprehensive Plan recognition from APA of Virginia for plaNorfolk and the Great American Neighborhood by the APA for West Freemason.

The Planning Commission's 2014 proposed work plan includes the following:

- Smart Processing ordinances
- Planning Commissioner training
- Parking Ordinance revisions
- Open Space/Landscaping Ordinance revisions
- Sign Ordinance revisions

## **B. BETTER BLOCK – 35<sup>TH</sup> STREET**

Mr. Williams reported that we are continuing our partnership with Team Better Block, which is led by the Park Place Business Association and the Park Place Civic League. The next demonstration project is scheduled for the evening of November 8<sup>th</sup> and all day November 9<sup>th</sup>. The project will include activation of vacant properties with new retail uses, parklets, traffic calming, music, food vending and possibly a church service. The city partnered with the Hampton Roads Realtors Association in applying for a Smart Growth Action Grant. A \$15,000 grant was awarded to support the 35<sup>th</sup> Street Better Block Demonstration Project.

## **C. 161 GRANBY STREET**

Mr. Duke reviewed the recent history and gave a schedule for improvements to the building. He noted that US Development has submitted a plan as required. The plan has been reviewed by the Building Official, Property Maintenance and the architect and has been approved as addressing all public safety issues. The work is set to be completed by May 27, 2014.